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RICHARD H. SYLVESTER, - Editor

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THE RAILROAD IN CHINA.

It was not so many years ago that the very thought of a railroad in the Celestial Empire made the Chinese mandarins of the red button and of the peacock feather supremely indignant. There has been one short line constructed, the possession of which was promptly acquired by the government, and it is a very profitable road; but it is not of Chinese origin. It was the invention and work of the outside barbarian. But China is in many ways getting rid of much of her old exclusiveness. It appears that her recent unpleasantness with France in the Tonkin country has convinced her that she must have railroads like other great powers. China had much trouble, we are told, in getting her troops to the scene of action, and what is of equal importance, quite as much trouble in getting them away in time of danger or defeat.

The Chinese Government, therefore, proposes to build a system of railways and to let Americans have the contracts for their construction. The relations between the roads and the government are to be very similar to those between the government of the United States and the Pacific railroads, and involving similar guarantees. In view of this fact, we take the liberty of advising friendly, far-off China, to see to it that her railroad agreements are so bound up and clinched that the railroad corporations do not get altogether the best side of the bargain. This advice may be entirely superfluous, for as the Chinese have a knack of chopping off the other day, it comes out of the wrecks that have recently overtaken the worthy class of truly good gentlemen to which Mr. Schurz belongs better than most of his fellow Mugwumps. They sprained their necks.

There is much money in prospect for the contractors that undertake the construction of these roads. China is teeming with life and national commerce. There will be plenty of railroad traffic for China, at present, has practically no transportation by rail. It has 2,500 miles of water front and a river 2,000 miles long, which can be tapped by railroads so as to make colossal fortunes for the stockholders and the directors—especially the directors.

And it will be no sparsely settled country through which the roads will run. If any one wanted to construct a road through a sparsely-inhabited region anywhere in China he would have to build it on edts over the water. Even then he would interfere with some of the population who have built out wharves, covered them with soil and erected houses thereon. Cities of 40,000 and 50,000 are as plentiful as flies in the summer. "There's millions," no doubt, in building railroads in China if the Government will grant anything like liberal terms and independent management of them after they are in running order.

No such field for railway building was ever before presented, and who can begin to estimate the political and economic results that will follow fast upon the introduction of so potent a factor in the civilization of mankind and the development of its material resources? Once netted with railroads and China, in spite of herself, will be no longer alone in the world.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF.

In an almost identical manner the celebrated forty acres of land and a mile have turned up in England. When our colored friends were enfranchised after the war, it was the popular belief among them that a domain of forty acres of rich bottom land and a good healthy mile were to be given each of them. The recent franchise bill gives to England a large number of new voters. One of these freshly hatched electors in Dorsetshire has been writing to a friend in New York about the Liberals, the Conservatives and politics generally, and in the course of his letter occurs these words, as translated into United States, in order to make them plainly intelligible: "But I want to say a few words about that land and that cow we are all to have by-and-by, which I think is a long way off. I am about convinced that there is nothing in it."

If any of those gentlemen who were prominent carpet-baggers in the South after the war, have been missed by their friends, we would suggest that they seek information as to their whereabouts in England. The chances are that something can be heard of them—possibly in Dorsetshire.

THE STAR'S LIBEL SUIT.

The libel suit of Dr. Hicks against the *Star* resulted yesterday in a merely nominal verdict for the plaintiff. No evidence of malice or other questionable motive in the publication of the alleged libelous matter was shown or tried, and however much the feelings of the prosecutor may have been hurt by reading a bit of current gossip, which he would rather have not seen in print, there was nothing to show that his character had been damaged, even to the extent of the one cent awarded. Our contemporary is to be congratulated upon escaping with no greater hardship.

We say congratulated; for no one outside of the newspaper business knows the constant risks which publishers run, no matter how closely the matter admitted to their columns is su-

pervised, of being subjected to annoy and expensive law suits for publications that may inadvertently contain some personal reflection, or, in the hands of an adroit or unprincipled lawyer, be made the basis of a prosecution. In the hurry of news-gathering it is next to impossible to avoid this danger, or, at times, to avoid mistakes, and where the business is honorably and legitimately conducted, as it is in the case of the *Star*, some latitude of consideration should be given to its complicated and embarrassing responsibilities.

No penalty is too severe for wanton or deliberate libel, but otherwise, justice may always safely err if it err at all, on the side of the liberty of the press.

THE young wife of an elderly and wealthy Boston banker, named Loud, is suing for a divorce from her husband. She alleges such playful things on the part of her cultured husband as being knocked across the room, kicked and cuffed and locked up in a bath-room at night in winter with no place to sleep except in the tub. The evidence taken in the case seems to establish the truthfulness of her allegations. Mr. Loud enters a general denial and claims that Mrs. Loud was not possessed of the best temper in the world. His chief allegation on this point is that while the two were boarding at the Revere House she got mad twice because she found water bugs in her soap. We suppose from this that if a Boston man's wife should complain of bed-bugs in her beans her husband would think that she was a fit subject for extermination.

JAMES W. O'BRIEN, who received the highest average in the recent competitive examination for the position of weigher in the New York Custom House, has been appointed to that position. Mr. O'Brien is an ex-Union soldier and a Republican. Ex-Alfredus Sterling, who was originally appointed as weigher and whose appointment was revoked because the position came under the civil service rules, is a Democrat and received 65 per cent. at the examination. The names of all who received as high as that per centage were sent to Collector Heiden, who selected Mr. O'Brien. There certainly a good deal of civil service about this; but the untrifled cannot see much superiority of Democrat in it.

MR. CARL SCHUERZ sprained his ankle while trying to catch a train in Boston the other day. He comes out of the wrecks that have recently overtaken the worthy class of truly good gentlemen to which Mr. Schurz belongs better than most of his fellow Mugwumps. They sprained their necks.

Since the unfortunate decline of mining in Nevada, Virginia City in that State, which formerly was one of the liveliest towns in the bounding West and was never without a sensation, has been seldom heard from. She has recently however had quite a stirring up. A mineral company has been visiting there; and the company, thirty strong, paraded the streets, each man wearing a plug hat. The plug has caused a sensation. Isolated cases of that kind of head gear had been seen in Virginia City at intervals, but never before had thirty-five of them been sprung at once upon the natives. They were lost in admiration and turned out en masse to see the show. The Flote Indians who form a good proportion of the inhabitants of the city, we are told, were paralyzed with wonder.

CHURCH AND CLERGY.
A NEW organ containing 1180 pipes and costing \$5,000 has just been put up in the First Methodist Church, Atlanta, Ga.

REV. F. M. STROTHORP has surrendered his charge of the Fincastle (Va.) circuit, M. E. Church South, on account of ill-health.

REV. JOHN McKEAN, late pastor of the Congregational Church at Herndon, Fairfax County, Va., has removed to Florida.

REV. WILLIAM DINWIDDIE of Alexandria will hold service every night next week in the Presbyterian Church at Fredericksburg.

REV. LEWIS S. WATSON, rector of St. James' P. E. Church, Port Deposit, Md., has accepted a call to King's Square, New York.

It is unexpected that Rev. Dr. W. G. Starr will be the next pastor of the Cumberland Street Methodist Church at Norfolk, Va.

THE ANNUAL CONVENTION of the Young Men's Christian Association of Maryland, West Virginia and the District of Columbia will meet at Martinsburg, November 19.

REV. GEORGE C. SETTON, late assistant rector of St. Stephen's P. E. Church at Petersburg, Va., has accepted a call to Zion Church, Bethesda, Prince George's County, Md.

The CONGREGATION OF Lee Street Baptist Church, Baltimore, has extended a call to Rev. Columbus Durham of Durban, N. C., to succeed Rev. W. F. Rose, who recently resigned.

REV. F. D. POWELL of this city will assist next week at the series of meetings now in progress at the Central Church in Rockville, under the direction of Elder W. H. Williams of Hagerstown.

The JESUIT COLLEGE Woodstock, N. C., General Superintendent, Wilmington, N. C., will hold service every night next week in the Presbyterian Church at Fredericksburg.

REV. L. S. W. THOMAS, rector of St. James' P. E. Church, Port Deposit, Md., has accepted a call to King's Square, New York.

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